



Counseling Military Families: What Mental Health Professionals Need to Know

By Lynn K. Hall

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According to the United States Department of Defense, by the end of 1993 there were 2,036,646 reservists and family members and 3,343,235 active duty and family members for a total of 5,379,781 people affected by the military. Since then, because of the conflict in Iraq, the numbers have dramatically increased. While we have always had military families in our midst, not since the Vietnam War have their struggles been so vivid, particularly with alarming rates of increase of both suicide and divorce among military personnel. The face of the military has changed; for the first time a volunteer army is serving in a major combat zone, the level of reservists serving is unprecedented, the percentage of women soldiers in virtually all positions is unprecedented and most of the soldiers have left spouses and/or families behind.

The objectives of *Counseling Military Families* are to help the practicing counselor understand how the military works, what issues are constants for the military family, and what stressors are faced by the military member and the family. The book will begin with an overview of military life, including demographic information and examples of military family issues, before delving into specific chapters focused on the unique circumstances of reservists, career service personnel, spouses, and children. The final section of the book will present treatment models and targeted interventions tailored for use with military families. This book will help counselors tailor their interventions to work well with families who are in transition, who may have an ingrained resistance to asking for help and who will, more than likely, be available for counseling for a relatively short period of time.

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